

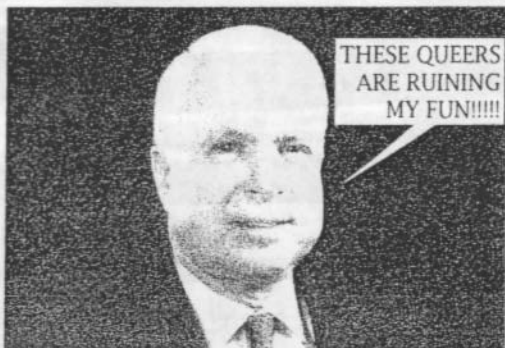


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# WHAT'S WITH THIS TOUR?

For two weeks, we are on the "No More War Tour," a trip across the country in a veggie waste oil-powered motorhome, ending at the Republican National Convention (RNC) in Minneapolis. Along the way, we're stopping in many cities playing benefit shows and events that support local organizations, as well as sharing information about our struggles in NYC and the upcoming demonstrations in Minneapolis surrounding the RNC. The wars we oppose extend far beyond the war in Iraq, to include the invading force of the entire US government agenda and its attacks across the US and the world.

We are fighting against wars on all fronts: the war against women, poor people, queer folks, people of color, the environment, public education and health care, workers' rights, and the steady chipping away of civil liberties. Through our joyous ruckus we foster the passion and possibility of another world; through our unflagging resistance we improve our current situation, step by step, until all these struggles are won.



## WHO ARE WE?



The Rude Mechanical Orchestra is a 30-odd-piece New York City-based radical marching band and dance troupe. Through our music and performance, we strive to support people and communities working for social justice. We play songs of resistance from around the world as well as originals inspired by Brazilian samba, Balkan brass, klezmer, Latin grooves, New Orleans jazz, American pop, funk and hip hop, all wrapped up with a punk rock attitude. We're a democratic collective with a diverse membership made up of individuals of various musical abilities. We formed in the spring of 2004 for the March for Women's Lives in Washington, D.C. and solidified to support people protesting the Republican National Convention in New York.

Since then we've played literally hundreds of marches, protests, direct actions, and picket lines against war, corporate greed, police brutality, union busters, privatizers, homophobes and gentrifiers. We've played equally many marches, parades, benefits and community festivals to support women's rights, immigrant communities, queer groups, labor unions, environmental organizations and community groups working for self-determination.

# WHAT'S A RADICAL MARCHING BAND?

Glad you asked! A radical marching band is a street band of activists who use music to support radical and progressive events, organizations and culture.

The music, presentation, instruments, and skill level can vary widely between different groups—the politics are the common ground in this movement.

Most bands have traditional brass, woodwinds, and percussion, while some are all drums and others include more unusual marching instruments like banjos, violins, accordions, melodicas and more. A few have megaphone-enhanced vocalists; or sing as a group at times. Some bands have visual elements like dancers, flag twirlers, fire breathers, or stilt walkers. Dozens of these bands exist and more get started every year.

These bands play indoors or out, standing still or moving. At big marches, the band can lift spirits and keep protesters pumped. Small rallies and actions can be made much louder and more visible by adding a band. Good organizations doing non street-based work can be supported by playing at their benefits and parties.

How do we start one? Here are some suggestions:

**The Call** The first thing is to get people together and playing. Write a fun but clear political statement about it and circulate. Use radical forums (Indymedia, activist listservs, etc.) and mainstream ones (Craigslist, musicians' forums, bike shops, community centers, supermarkets, music shops.) Don't worry, the politics will scare off right-wingers, and often attract unorganized people who are angry and want to make noise about it. Talk to friends and strangers about the band—and get their contact info as well as giving out your flyers.

**Practice!** It's important to get people excited first and not spend hours meeting about names, uniforms, mission statement—those will come. Make practices welcoming with food, drinks, and good music before playing time. Pick one or two easy songs and jump right in. It's ok if it sounds rough; many people will be learning or relearning their instruments. (TIP: Have extra hand percussion around for people without their own instruments.)

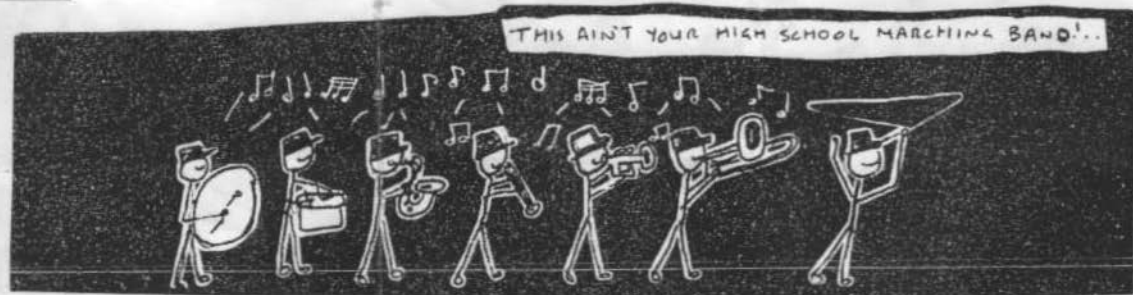
**The Music** You might find a wide range of skill levels at first. People will get better with practice—if they feel welcomed and supported and keep coming. Start simple and go slow at first. There's great sheet music free at <http://brassliberation.org/sheetmusic.php> and <http://www.rudemechanicalorchestra.org/songs-we-play>. Songs like Bella Ciao and Bubamara are good starters.

**Get organized!** An important assignment for new band members is finding more recruits—have flyers available and ask them to forward your call to their networks. Make a weekly practice time/place that works for everyone. The easiest way for the band to disappear is to get lost in scheduling limbo. Eventually, you'll want a website, mission statement, listserv, contact list of members and a collection of sheet music. The best way to do all this is by splitting up the work, allowing everyone to be a vital member of the organization and preventing burn out.

**Now, play some gigs!** The best first gigs are in the streets, especially protests, marches and parades, where you can play a limited repertoire repeatedly, or improvise by backing up chants—plus the crowd probably won't even notice mistakes. Once the word is out, there'll be no stopping the deluge of new recruits and radical gigs! Questions? Email us at [rmo@riseup.net](mailto:rmo@riseup.net) for support and advice. Love and Noise!

To learn about existing bands from all over the U.S., check out [www.honkfest.org](http://www.honkfest.org) the website for an annual street band convergence. Or, search for "streetband" in Yahoo groups for an international listserv on the subject.







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